

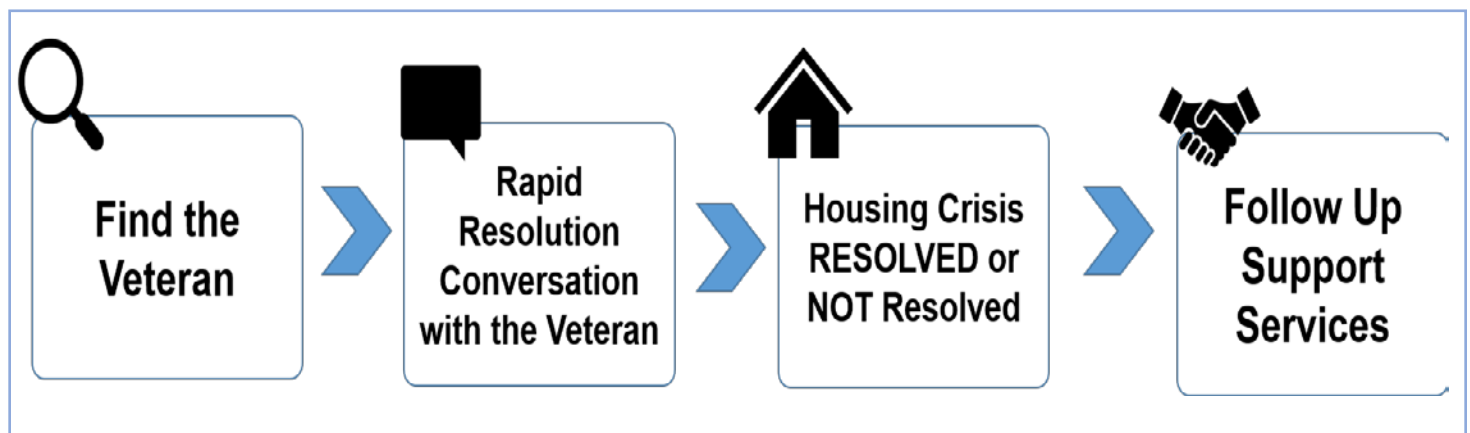
General Overview of Rapid Resolution

Rapid Resolution is a housing intervention that seeks to assist households to maintain their current housing situation or identify an immediate and safe housing alternative to emergency shelter or the streets within their own network of family, friends and social supports. Working alongside people facing a housing crisis in an empowering manner, Rapid Resolution assists them at the very beginning of that crisis or shortly after they have entered the homeless system.

Through Rapid Resolution households are engaged in an immediate, deep conversation about safe, alternative housing options so that shelter or other situations of literal homelessness might be avoided. The housing option could be returning to a previous place with family or friends or finding another temporary housing location. That temporary housing location might turn into a permanent location or it may not. The household might stay in the temporary housing location for one night, several nights, a month, or longer. Rapid Resolution also ensures that those households who do not have alternative housing options are quickly connected to existing emergency or crisis housing services at the VA or in their community to ensure their immediate health and safety needs are met.

Rapid Resolution should be attempted as the very first intervention with every person who presents with a housing crisis – it is a conversation; not an assessment. Rapid Resolution begins with one or more deliberate, thoughtful and individualized conversation(s) with the person to seek to solve their immediate housing crisis. Rapid Resolution is a service intervention, not a program; it is the first step in a phased assessment approach that does not rely on any sort of checklist or form.

Rapid Resolutions conversations depend on the ability of staff to help uncover the unique assets and needs of the household, and use that information to identify connections the household may have outside of the homelessness system. The conversation should be collaborative, client-centered, strengths-based, and focused on uncovering options and resources, even if those alternative options are temporary. The most common Rapid Resolution activities and skills include: active listening, coaching, motivational interviewing, mediation and conflict resolution with families/friends and/or landlords, connections to mainstream resources, housing search assistance, housing stabilization planning, family reunification, among others.



Reminders and Hints: Key Ingredients for Productive Conversations

Creating Comfortable, Safe Meeting Environments

An in-person meeting is likely the most effective way to have these conversations; however, many homeless crisis response systems might need rely on phone-based Rapid Resolution efforts given geographic constraints and other local conditions. The goal is to create a private, quiet space to help put participants at ease while you work together through their crisis. Practitioners should seek to set-up a quiet meeting space or a place to have a quiet, uninterrupted phone call and follow meeting practices that foster trust building with the participant—minimize note taking, use active listening, offer some coffee or water, and work together in partnership with the person to identify options and find the next steps. Similar considerations should be made when Rapid Resolutions conversations take place in the context of street outreach activities, whereby practitioners should attempt to find the most private environment possible at the time.

A Conversation Not a Checklist

The conversation described in this document needs to be fluid and not one where you should worry about all of the intake questions that are normally needed to enroll someone in a program, with the exception of questions that establish basic eligibility for SSVF.

A key component to this process is listening carefully to both what is *not said* as much as what *is said* by the person.

- Observe body language or voice/tone.
- Use open-ended questions to elicit information.
- Questions for the participant should build on each other.
- Keep an ear open to possible people in their networks that might be able to provide support
- Keep in mind that in their crisis, stress may cause the person to overlook or “write off” family members or friends out of frustration, embarrassment, or based on past experiences
- Listen carefully and assume that you can help the participant find another/better situation than entering or remaining in the shelter system.
- *Ensure client safety and promoting client choice are always a priority*

Talking to Solve the Immediate Crisis

The primary goal of Rapid Resolution is to try to identify and secure a safe alternative housing location, even if temporary. Activities you may use in this process could include: coaching and problem-solving; conflict resolution and mediation (with landlords and/or friends and/or family); connection to mainstream resources; housing search assistance and stabilization planning.

If at any point in the conversation the person identifies a possible temporary or permanent housing option, pivot to taking action steps with the person to explore if that the housing is available. Assist the person to make the necessary arrangements.

Assisting with the connections and/or arrangements may include talking to the person that has been identified as a possible source of support, or negotiating services that will help make it possible for the household to stay with the potential host. It is not necessary to go through every step found in this document but rather to keep in mind the various elements or pivot points that may exist when offering this type of crisis intervention.

Rapid Resolution Conversation Elements

Introductions, Goals and Building Rapport

This is not meant to be a script—the sample language and questions are suggestions to help better understand this work. Staff should use an informal, supportive conversation style and active listening to work together with the participant to identify housing and support solutions

“Hi, my name is _____ and I work for _____. Our goal today is to learn more about your housing situation right now and what you need. We’ll work together to address your needs as quickly as possible.”

Try to put the Veteran at ease. Make some small talk. Ask about their service, comment about the weather. Anything to begin to break the ice and indicate that this is not the “normal” meeting with a provider, but rather one where we are going to go slow and try to have a conversation about their situation.

Basic Eligibility (SSVF Specific)

“May I please start by asking you just a couple of questions to make sure we are the right place to assist you?”

- *“Have you served in the military? Are you a Veteran? Do you happen to have a VA ID with you?”*
- *“What is your income?” [for staff: are they under 50% AMI?]*
- *“Who is in your household at this time?” [for staff: they define]*

If they don’t meet preliminary eligibility, refer as appropriate through the Coordinated Entry process to other diversion staff or to an immediate connection to shelter or other crisis housing to ensure immediate safety needs are met.

Ask About Their Situation and Safety Planning

Ask the person what brought them to seek assistance today and to share their current housing situation. Let them share their story and listen actively. Encourage them to share more.

- *“What led you to reach out to us today?”*
- *“Tell me a little bit about your current situation.”*
- *“Are you fleeing domestic violence or is there any other potential threat to your safety?”*
- *“Can you tell me more about that?”*

Explore Possible Family, Social or other Supports/Assets

Use questions such as the ones list below. This part of the conversation could take up to an hour, or more. You are trying to get an understanding of the person’s relationships, their history of seeking help from other supports, the reasons the person is there at this time, etc.

REMEMBER: *The person in front of you (or on the phone) is in crisis. This means that their stress level is making it difficult to think, to see options, to make plans, and to assess their situation. Your job is to help lower the stress level and prompt new thinking and ideas that may be hidden.*

- *“Where and with whom did you stay last night? What caused you to leave?”*
- *“Would it be safe to stay there tonight? A couple of days? A week?”*
- *“Are there other reasons you needed to leave?”*

- *“Tell me about your family, friends and other people important to you. Where are they? Are they available to help you? Would they be available to help you if we provided you or them with some help or services?”*
- *“Do you think you could possibly stay there again if we provided you or them with some help or services?”*
- *“Do you have friends, who if they were in the same situation, you would help? Maybe they would be willing to help you?”*
- *“What about people at work?”*
- *“Are you active in a religious group? Could they be helpful?”*
- *“Have you been in touch with any Veterans’ groups?”*
- *“What would they say if they knew you were entering a shelter?”*

Choose Options and Contact Support Person/Network

Assist the person to choose the best available option (staying with family or friend or receiving help from family/friend to pay for a night at a hotel, etc.). Assess whether the housing option is safe and how the person would like you to assist with the process.

- *“Would this be a safe place for you, even if just temporarily?”*
- *“Are you comfortable calling the potential support person? Why not?”*
- *“Can I help you call the landlord or family to mediate the conflict or assist with the arrangements?”*
- *“What do you think would make the request more acceptable to the support person? Are there services you think they could benefit from?”*
- *“Would you prefer that I call them to break the ice? Can I help you explain your situation to them?”*

Offer Services to the Veteran and the Host

Rapid Resolution may be able to offer certain services and assistance directly to the host family which may remove barriers to potential housing. Ideally the support person will not need intensive help or require incentives to support the household, but it may be the case that the new support household is in need of services as well. Offer these resources to either or both the participant and the friend, family member or support person who is considering allowing the Veteran to stay with them. ***Use a Progressive Engagement/Assistance model when thinking about what resources might be helpful.*** Offer just what is needed to address the housing crisis, not more. Your community may also have other non-SSVF resources to offer. Make sure you know what resources you have available before the conversation begins.

For instance, the Rapid Resolution team may offer the Veteran and host supportive services and support, such as:

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| • Connection to Mainstream benefits | • Lease and tenant law expertise |
| • Connection to VA benefits | • Connections to other community benefits, resources and social service providers |
| • Case Management services | • Limited financial assistance |
| • Income and Employment Connections | • Limited rent or emergency housing payments |
| • Housing support, including budgeting and other life skills | |
| • Coordination with landlords | |

If the Housing Crisis Can't Be Resolved

If it becomes clear that a housing option is not possible tonight, assist them to access shelter for the night by doing a warm hand-off and make a plan for the program to be in touch with them the next day, or in accordance with your local Coordinated Entry and Rapid Resolution protocol, to talk with them about housing referrals appropriate within your community system.